

GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE BLIND

STATE OF DELAWARE

January 6, 2017 MEETING MINUTES

Welcome: Lloyd Schmitz welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Call to Order: Chair, Lloyd Schmitz called the meeting to order at Smyrna Rest Stop at 10:00 a.m.

Lloyd requested everyone to turn off cell phones.

Roll Call: Council Chair Lloyd Schmitz, Deidre Morris, Jim Law, Marjorie Deska, Ken Rolph, Patti Addison. Absent: Jillian Queen

Division for the Visually Impaired (DVI) Staff: Elisha Jenkins, Director; Dava Newnam, Deputy Director; Michele Hamilton, Administrative Specialist; Olu Ogunsola; Rob Schmidlkofer.

Members of the Public: BEP: Wayne Marsh, Anthony Paolini, and Thomas Newcomb. Rob Keller.

Reports

Director's Report: Elisha Jenkins wished everyone a Happy New Year. The focus remains on DIB and the education departments to address issues.

DIB. December sales \$25,231, low. Production has 104 orders for the month. Customer Service Team contacted DIB's customer base in an effort to increase revenues. The neckerchief team is meeting the terms of the contract. Vendor's new materials scheduled around January-February, with no interruption in production. Continuing to encourage employees to work with VR counselors to ensure they are taking advantage of Selective Placement and other employment opportunities. Our goal is to do what's best for our DIB employees. Lloyd: Under Employment First's concept of competitive, integrated employment, within the model of a sheltered workshop or a segregated facility for people with disabilities, that doesn't fall within the state structure. Correct. It may not stay within the state structure. Similar to Delaware Psychiatric Center, placements were made in other facilities. Dava is researching this with the Attorney General. It is listed in the Delaware code in order to follow all the steps in such a partnership. Lloyd: In DPC, 50% of their people have been placed in employment and 50% have not been placed yet. Lloyd: Break even point \$20,000. Profit? Elisha will get that information. Lloyd asked if the December 2016 minutes report of sales of \$58,000 was accurate. Elisha will get that information.

ILS and Materials Center. Miss Delaware complimented the Material Center for getting students their adapted educational material. Two ILS employees worked together with the Wilmington Library to develop a tactile building map with braille, using a 3D printer. It is available to patrons. Lloyd asked how patrons know that the map is there and how to find it. Lloyd suggested promoting it on the website, Facebook, and newsletter. Elisha will explore the possibilities of getting the information out.

Training. DVI held their winter training program and employee recognition event on December 20th. Training was facilitated by Hudson Whitenight who presented "Bring Your A Game to Work," a curriculum focused on seven desirable "A" skills for employees: Appreciation, Attitude, Attendance, Appearance, Ambition, Accountability and Acceptance. Employee Recognition: Loretta Harper received the Employee of the Year for her service efforts. Many other staff members were recognized as well. Follow up? Yes, leadership teams have established "Lunch & Learn" once a month sessions reinforce previous training and varied interests. Deidre Morris, who attended the training, suggested that the "Bring Your A Game to Work" curriculum be required training for all DIB employees. Lloyd: Was it a requirement for DVI staff? No, but it certainly could be. Discussion included repeating the mandatory training in May.

VR. One DVI consumer took advantage of an self-employment networking opportunity at Delaware Tech event "One Million Cups." On December 21-22, 2016, DVI attended the Delaware Transition Initiatives Stakeholders meeting to define, review, discuss and improve transition services for students. Sandy J. Miller is coordinating the event.

DVI Material Center. In December, *Men with a Message* Program produced 2503 braille pages, 1865 large print pages, 1145 customized large print pages, and 216 tactile graphics.

Consumer Satisfaction feedback. DVI went live with Survey Monkey to monitor feedback and having a more standardized email signature. Lloyd said he has not seen this on the emails he has received. Each email has a link to provide feedback. We have received four responses so far.

Employee Absence Concern. Lloyd: In the Assistive Technology Center, one of the DVI employees is out for an extended period of time. There is no message on her phone or automatic response to emails from consumers to inform them of her absence. The consumers think they are being ignored. Could you put a message on email or block on it? HR will not allow access to employee email. Elisha will ask about blocking and make sure her phone calls are forwarded. Consumers reassigned? Yes, reassigned to an area contractor. Lloyd said that he was told consumers weren't informed until arriving at their service appointments. The employee's service calendar was consulted and clients were contacted immediately, but there may have been one or two they were unable to reach. Patti: Under Peer Support, I give alternate options for the training. There may be a potential partnership with Ken Rolph.

Technology: Students need to learn the assistive technology as well. Elisha said the teachers are responsible to teach the students. Lloyd: Teachers might not know how to use the equipment. Marjorie asked if the iPad and the smart board be connected for the visually impaired student to view at their desk? Students don't like to look different and it would be a good method for the student to participate in classes unobtrusively. This should be part of the inservice curriculum. The districts have provided some training in this area as well. There is a lot of technology that could be employed to help these kids, not only function, but fit in.

Education. Five new teachers of special education will begin employment with DVI on 1/9/17 (2 in Milford, 3 in New Castle). Three new applications received this week, five vacancies. Lloyd will research the Braille Bill to find out the information needed for the teachers training in UEB.

Principal? The position has been reposted Dava and Elisha working with HR team classification which school administrative experience three years five years teaching experience same requirements.

Legislation. There is a new strategic plan being written with seven categories under special education that's being developed. DOE is spearheading it with about 30 members. The stakeholder workgroup has seven goals for development of the strategic plan which include the following: Students, Parents & Families, Community, Staff/Partners, Resources, Policies & Regulations, and Delivery/Structure /Systems. Elisha will get the Legislative bill for the council. The plan will be presented on January 19. The State Board anticipates the new secretary will continue this plan.

End of Report.

DVI Fiscal Report – Olu Ogunsola.

DVI's Federal reports are up to date. The State of Delaware's financial situation is currently not good. The DEFAC (Delaware Economic & Financial Advisory Council) revenue projections for Fiscal Year (FY) 18 are down \$167 million from last fiscal year. Altogether, \$350 million down from last year. FY 18 budget, DVI is requesting \$219,400 for contractual teachers. We have been asked to review our budget to see if we can present any possible cuts. That is being research. DVI currently has approximately a \$100,000 deficit in contractual funds. The Division of Management Services gives \$150,000.00 to support DVI's contractual teacher needs. We also have a \$420,000 deficit in Personnel. DIB continues to struggle financially. Lloyd: \$420K, merit positions? Merit and seasonal. Total budget is increased? Yes, actual figure. All reports up-to-date quarterly annually, federal annual? Yes. Annual audits of BEP? No. Plans for audits? No. It was supposed to be an external audit.

Vendor reimbursement. In January 2015 there was a \$8500 disbursement for Cisco Bill. Olu will follow up. Vendor reimburse? No. Requires follow up and report. Lloyd does not want it ignored. Elisha will check the matter further.

Payroll. BEP in excess of \$60,000 for two consecutive years. Payroll obligations current? Olu said they are current. It is tracked in fiscal and set aside obligations are coming in. No P/Ls for two months? Olu will send. Lloyd said all your staff is doing a good job. Joint Finance Committee meeting? Dava said 3rd-4th week of Feb.

Check writing. Fiscal is using manual check-writing system. Recommendation for the agency to go to an automated system.

End of Report

BEP Report- Rob Schmidlkofer.

BEP Orientation Physical location at the Smyrna Rest Stop scheduled on January 11, teleconferenced in Milford and the Biggs Building. This will be an overview of the program, how it works, and how to begin. Lloyd: This construction might make it difficult with having the physical location here.

DelTech café. Catering \$200,000 in room rentals. The catering equipment is the biggest challenge and expense in order to do these catering functions, which is why they are not profit-making now. Three employees are doing the catering. When you look at the P/L, Rob wanted to bring attention to the equipment purchases. Lloyd said these are under the operating expenses. Labor will be low since you have a lag payroll and it is not reflected in the first report. P/L should show what the expenses are. Del Tech stretches the 30 day payment, so it straddles months. Del Tech is working out quite well.

Delaware State U. Kept the contract. Expenses starting with the Carvel Building - electricians, plumbing, and refrigerators. State of DE contract with BEP alone? DSU and BEP. State of DE should be on the contract. There may be liability issues. Should be explored. This is their contract to us.

Carvel. When did the cafeteria close? a year ago, because of the refrigerator? Yes and other issues: operators, employment issues to get the skilled workers. Carvel Building may open January 23. Public health permit? Very important to see if BEP still has public health permit.

Del Tech. Meeting helped with bringing people into the cafeteria and to understand it is a location for a blind operator. Attendees? Faculty and President of the school. Other campuses? Administration from Georgetown. Suggestion to make contact with Stanton and Wilmington campuses to let them know you are interested. \$700/day in sales when in class? yes.

Training. Meetings with Del tech staff to start sensitivity training since more visually impaired are working there. Very receptive.

Trainee. One new trainee going through the program, going into the second module. Done training 2-3 months? 3 months start probationary period.

Rest Stop. Rob wants Rest Stop to succeed. Incorporate business evaluation group, called Fox to score and see how we can improve locations, such as the Rest Stop. Is there lighting in the cabinets? Burned out, but replacing one, and one is wire hazard; the other are glass.

Vending machines. Elisha said the vending machines acquisition would be contingent upon waiving the rights to the DelDot Admin Building. Jim Law asked for clarification. BEP has the rights to the DelDot location from the past cafeteria, which failed. Under the Randolph Sheppard Act, through the State law for food service, BEP has to waive those right for someone else to operate the cafeteria in the newly renovated building. The BEP operator is not willing to waive those rights.

BEP policies and procedures. Lloyd's understanding is that BEP would participate in the State Payroll and enjoy the benefits of being on the State Payroll. Elisha said that BEP may not be on the State Payroll. This would be a change in the Policies and Procedures. BEP employees aware and allowed to respond? Wayne Marsh said the BEP employees are aware and have been discussing it for some time. The policy is that the State shall recognize BEP employees as State employees for pension purposes, not a directive of what BEP will or shall do. Lloyd sent an email inquiry, no response yet. Dava said a response is coming.

End of Report.

Resolution for Debbie Briddell. Lloyd said he emailed the Resolution, copies are available, and it can be read aloud. Lloyd asked for an approval from the Council. Marjorie Deska made a motion to approve the Resolution, seconded by Deidre Morris. Motion carried. Lloyd said it will be printed on parchment paper. Lloyd asked Elisha to move it forward to the Governor's office.

Public Comments

Council Members: Patti Addison said she is excited to serve as a member of the Council and to learn about the different entities within the agency and the field of vision impairment. She is accessible by cell phone and email. Lloyd said that Ken Rolph has agreed to continue his service on the Council. Marjorie Deska will be leaving the Council. Also, Jim Law's term is concluding in April. He, too, will be leaving the Council. Lloyd said the GACB roster and letterhead are being updated.

New Administration Swearing In: Rob Keller said Governor John Carney and Lt. Governor Bethany Hall-Long will be sworn in on January 17th at 12 noon. He shared the information about the celebration and where to obtain tickets. He said he does not know who will run DVI, but he would like to know the Council's recommendations. Lloyd said he recommends Elisha and Dava. Many Council members agreed.

Next meeting location. Rob Schmidlkofer offered Blindsight Delaware for future meetings during the construction process. Lloyd thanked Rob for his offer. He will discuss it with Elisha.

Adjournment: Marjorie Deska made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Jim Law. Lloyd Schmitz adjourned the meeting at 12:07 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by,

Jillian Queen

Jillian Queen
Council Member